

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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REPORTED DENIAL BY ISRAELI SEAMEN OF SOVIET ANTI-SEMITISM

Comment: The Communist and pro-Communist press has constantly refuted charges of anti-Semitism made against the USSR by Western newspapers. The following article in the Paris pro-Communist Yiddish-language daily, Naje Presse, relates an incident intended to prove that these anti-Semitic charges are unfounded. The bold-type headline, "**Sailors of Israeli Ships Shatter Anti-Soviet Lies**," indicates the tenor of the article.

Crew members of the Israeli merchant ships SS Hadar and SS Tsefonit, who last month visited Odessa, have declared that the anti-Semitic charges against the USSR are founded. By such declarations, these Israeli seamen have struck a serious blow against the anti-Soviet campaign of agitation being conducted by the West.

Early in January 1953, the SS Hadar returned to Haifa from Odessa, where it had unloaded oranges and other citrus fruit shipped to the USSR. The Tel Aviv scandal sheet Yedioth Aharonoth, in the name of the seamen, immediately fabricated the story that an anonymous seaman of the SS Hadar had allegedly "seen with his own eyes" how a Jew had been arrested and taken to a police building in a closed car.

However, this fabricated story has been categorically denied not only by the seamen of the SS Hadar, but also by the Shoham Maritime Services Ltd., Haifa, owner of the SS Hadar. The SS Hadar is owned by ZIM Israel Navigation Company Ltd., Haifa, whose general shipping agent in Israel is Shoham Maritime Services Ltd./. Shoham asserted that the statement published in Yedioth Ahar-  
onoth was entirely false, and added that the Israeli ship and crew were in no way discriminated against on arrival in Odessa. Furthermore, the seamen declared that they were treated very congenially in the USSR, and that they were allowed to visit whomever they wanted and to go where they pleased. They pointed out that, among other places, they visited various clubs, recreational places,

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a movie, the opera, took part in the New Year celebration, and attended a synagogue service. The seamen also reported that the abundance of products and the great number of customers in the stores were amazing and that they themselves had bought numerous articles.

In an unofficial interview with several news correspondents in Haifa, the seamen of the SS Tsafonit, which brought 65,000 cases of citrus fruit to the USSR and remained in Odessa for 16 days, also reported that they were treated very congenially by the Soviets. These seamen further related that they walked and rode around in various places, visited the Seamen's Club met with many Jews. One of the men even asserted that he had permission to live with his mother in Odessa the whole time the ship was there. The crew of the SS Tsafonit then declared that they were not allowed to give an official report on their visit to Moscow [probably means the USSR] after their return to Israel and that Israeli police prohibited news correspondents from boarding the ship and talking with the crew. The crew said that one correspondent, who managed to gain access to the deck of the ship was immediately escorted from the ship by police before he could speak to the seamen.

Thus, the prohibiting of Israeli seamen to talk in Israel of their visit in the USSR proves that the Israeli government is afraid that when the true facts about the USSR become known to the public, the anti-Soviet campaign of the warmongers will be disrupted. However, despite the precautions of Ben-Gurion and his police, the stories told by the Israeli seamen have reached the public, thus proving once again the lying and slanderous campaign against the alleged "Red anti-Semitism."

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